

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2310

INFO AMCONSUL BRISBANE

AMCONSUL PERTH

AMCONSUL MELBOURNE

AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USAEC GERMANTOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0175

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TECH, ENRG, AS

SUBJ: CODEL HOSMER VISIT

REF: (A) CANBERRA 0174 (B) STATE 004388

1. CONGRESSMAN CRAIG HOSMER, RANKING MINORITY MEMBER JCAE, VISITED CANBERRA JAN. 8-10 PRIOR TO VISITING AUSTRALIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION IN SYDNEY. HIS CANBERRA STAY INCLUDED CALLS ON OFFICIALS DEPARTMENTS FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TREASURY AND REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL MINING INDUSTRY. CALL ON MINERALS AND ENERGY MINISTER CONNOR AND DME SECRETARY HEWITT COVERED REF A, AND CALL ON ADOD OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS NPW VISITS WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY. OTHER CALLS SUBJECT THIS MESSAGE, WERE ON: DR. J.W.C. CUMES, FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY, DFA; J.H. GARRETT, ACTING SECRETARY, TREASURY; AND G. PAUL PHILLIPS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AUSTRALIAN MINING INDUSTRY COUNCIL. JCAE STAFF MEMBER GRAHAM AND EMBASSY OFFICER SAT IN ON MEETINGS. CONGRESSMAN AND MRS.HOSMER ALSO WERE GUESTS OF HONOR AT JAN. 9 DINNER AT EMBASSY WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY HEWITT, OTHER GOA SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS AND EXECUTIVES FROM WESTINGHOUSE, GENERAL ELECTRIC AND BECHTEL.

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2. IN HIS THREE CALLS, CONGRESSMAN HOSMER REITERATED POINTS MADE IN MEETING WITH CONNOR. CONGRESSMAN SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED HIS PRESS RELEASE (REF B), "THE DAY THE BOTTOM FELL OUT OF THE URANIUM RAW MATERIAL MARKET", COPIES OF WHICH HE HANDED OUT ON ALL CALLS. MR. HOSMER EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS REPRESENTING HIS OWN VIEWS, PARTICULARLY REGARDING POTENTIAL OF LASER EXCITATION PROCESS, DISCUSSED IN HIS PRESS RELEASE. IN ALL OF HIS CALLS, THE CONGRESSMAN FOUND VERY FRIENDLY AND INTERESTED AUDIENCES. WHILE MUCH OF HIS TECHNICAL COMMENTARY WAS BEYOND THE EXPERTISE OF HIS LISTENERS, MR. HOSMER UNFAILINGLY EXCITED THEIR INTEREST AND APPRECIATION FOR BRINGING HIS VIEWS TO THEM.

3. ANOTHER IMPORTANT THEME WHICH THE CONGRESSMAN PURSUED WITH GOA OFFICIALS WAS NEED FOR CLEARER ELABORATION OF GOA'S POLICY ON URANIUM EXPORTS. CONGRESSMAN SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD MINISTER CONNOR'S INTENTION "TO EXPORT URANIUM WHEN THE PRICE IS RIGHT IN ENRICHED FORM", BUT POINTED OUT THAT U.S. AND OTHER COUNTRIES NEED MORE DETAILS IF AUSTRALIAN PARTICIPATION IN WORLD URANIUM MARKET IS NOT TO CAUSE SERIOUS MISCALCULATIONS ON WORLD ENRICHMENT CAPACITY OR DISLOCATIONS OF URANIUM MARKETS. AS IN CONNOR CALL, THE CONGRESSMAN WAS NOT ABLE TO OBTAIN ANY REAL CLARIFICATION OF GOA POLICY. CUMES OPINED THAT, SINCE PRESENT LABOR GOA HAS BARELY COMPLETED FIRST YEAR IN POWER, IT PROBABLY WILL CLARIFY ITS URANIUM INTENTIONS IN MONTHS AHEAD.

4. CONGRESSMAN HOSMER ALSO EXPOUNDED HIS VIEW THAT AUSTRALIA SHOULD LOOK LONG AND HARD AT ECONOMICS OF LOCAL ENRICHMENT BEFORE COMMITTING ENORMOUS CAPITAL INVESTMENT, WHATEVER TECHNOLOGY IS USED, TO SUCH A HIGHLY COMPLEX AND FINANCIALLY RISKY PROJECT. HE EMPHASIZED HIS VIEW THAT AUSTRALIA MIGHT WELL FIND USES FOR SUCH CAPITAL INVESTMENT OTHER THAN ENRICHMENT, ALTHOUGH HE EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF POLITICAL ATTRACTION OF "MAXIMUM PROCESSING OF LOCAL RAW MATERIALS BEFORE EXPORT" AS A GENERAL OBJECTIVE.

5. EMBASSY COMMENT: CONGRESSMAN HOSMER'S CALLS WERE VERY WELL RECEIVED THROUGHOUT HIS STAY AND EXCITED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST AMONG OFFICIALS CNTACTED. EMBASSY HAS QUIETLY POINTED OUT THAT CONGRESSMAN'S VIEWS ARE HIS OWN, NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF JCAE OR USG. CONGRESSMAN WILL MEET AUSTRALIAN PRESS JAN. 11 IN SYDNEY
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AND CONGEN SYDNEY WILL REPORT DETAILS OF HIS SYDNEY VISIT AS APPROPRIATE.
HARROP

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Message Attributes

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